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JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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ORIENTAL RUGS AND CARPETS IN THE ATTMORE-OLIVER HOUSE

Thomas J. Farnham

Editor's note: Thomas Farnham, who taught American history at Southern Connecticut State University until his retirement in 1992, has been studying antique carpets for almost as long as he has been writing about the early history of the United States. Rugs of the Bijar area of Iran are his particular interest and a subject about which he has lectured extensively.

Like a certain popular comedian, the Oriental rugs and carpets which reside in the Attmore-Oliver House probably do not get all the respect they deserve. (The terms rugs and carpets are used to differentiate the size of weavings. Generally any floor covering measuring 4' x 6' or smaller is called a rug; anything larger, a carpet.) Visitors at the house are, one must imagine, so impressed by either the house itself or some of its furniture--items such as the Josiah Martin drop leaf table, as an example--that they ignore what is under their feet. While none of the rugs should attract the attention the Martin table does, each rug is certainly worth a careful look, because each is a beautiful hand-crafted item in its own right and because collectively the rugs have something to tell visitors about the different categories of Oriental rugs.

Probably the carpet which catches more visitors' attention than any other is the central medallion carpet in the front parlor. Made by weavers in the Iranian city of Tabriz prior to World War II, it was clearly manufactured for the European or North American market where medallion carpets of baroque

styling were and are highly regarded. Tabriz, the capital of the northwestern Iranian province of Azerbaijan, has been producing carpets for centuries, but the industry nearly collapsed after the fall of the Safavid Empire in the early eighteenth century. By the later nineteenth century, Tabriz was again weaving large numbers of carpets although most--like the one in the front parlor--were produced for Western purchasers. Because the industry became so market-oriented, the city's weavers, most of whom worked in factory-like settings, offered products in whatever designs, whatever colors, or whatever quality Western buyers required. One can as easily happen upon a Tabriz carpet which is coarsely woven and makes use of borrowed designs and harsh colors as one can discover an exquisitely created and compactly woven one with traditional motifs and palette.

While the Tabriz in the front parlor of the Attmore-Oliver House falls far short of representing the best weaving from that city and while its design was created by a professional designer who was catering to Western tastes, it is in many respects an appealing carpet. It contains an impressive Herati border, a border based upon a continuous band of palmettes connected by floral motifs. This particular type of palmette is known as the Shah Abbas, named for Tabriz's most influential patron Shah Abbas the Great, who ruled the Safavid Empire from 1586 until 1628 and who did much to stimulate the renaissance of Persian textile arts. The designer placed palmettes in both the border and in the central medallion to provide unity. On your next visit to the house notice also the curvilinear scheme of the carpet, typically Persian, and how the overall appearance of the medallion and spandrels, or corners, gives the carpet the look of a book cover, specifically the look of the magnificently tooled leather covers used to bind the Koran during the era of Shah Abbas. This Tabriz will not inspire the awe that the greatest products of that city would, but it clearly deserves a diligent inspection.

The carpet in the back parlor originated in the same general area of Iran, Azerbaijan. It is, however, identified with the small town of Heriz, where it was probably not woven but was very likely originally sold. Some Oriental rug scholars believe the weavers from the 30 or so small villages around Heriz might have once woven curvilinear patterns not vastly different from those woven in Tabriz, but because of the demands of Western buyers those craftsmen turned to the production of rectilinear rugs and carpets, pieces based upon the use of horizontal, diagonal, and perpendicular lines. Given their concern with the European and North American markets, weavers from Heriz, like those from Tabriz, created carpets of varying quality. Their designs, unique among Persian carpets, are more consistent however. Vast numbers of carpets with large, angular medallions came to the West from Heriz, and significant numbers of carpets with overall, angular floral schemes also originated in that region. After seeing only a few Herizes, one can recognize them without difficulty.

The carpet in the back parlor contains an overall design scheme, and its predominant brick red color is as typical of Heriz weaving as its design. The carpet appears to have been made approximately 60 years ago, prior to World War II, around the same time the Tabriz in the front parlor was woven. Also like the Tabriz the Heriz represents less quality than the weavers of that region can produce. If you have ever inspected a Serapi carpet, an old, finely woven Heriz, you must be struck by the contrast between it and this Heriz. As a decorative carpet, this one is of a type highly regarded by contemporary Americans, especially when they are looking for a floor covering which complements antiques.

In the downstairs central hall is a handsome Kurdish runner from northwestern Iran. Larger Kurdistan, the area that attracted so much attention during the recent Persian Gulf War, extends from eastern Turkey across northern Iraq and through the southern Caucasus and Armenia and northwestern

KURDISH RUG IN DOWNSTAIRS CENTRAL HALL WAS WOVEN BY NOMADS. Photo by Conway.

Iran; although rugs are produced in all these areas, only those woven in Iran are designated as Kurdish rugs, those produced elsewhere being known by various other names such as Yuruks or Kurd Kazaks.

The Kurdish rug in the Attmore-Oliver House features a dark blue field covered with a Mina Khani design of vines and flower heads in shades of rose, pale blue, golden yellow, and ivory, within a yellow rosette main border. The Mina Khani design consists of a tendril trellis formed by four main flowers within which dwells a rosette surrounded by four blossoms. This design, which supposedly originated in Khorasan, the largest of Iran's provinces, was skillfully executed. This runner, unlike the Tabriz and the Heriz in the adjoining rooms, was conceived and designed by nomads and woven on a make-shift loom. It was made more or less 100 years ago.

None of the rugs on the second floor of the house are of Iranian or Persian provenance. (Iranian and Persian carpets are of course synonymous terms. Until about 1935 Westerners referred to Iran as Persia, the Greek word used since ancient times for that part of the world.) Three of them, two in the front bedroom and one in the hall, are products of Turkestan, an area in Central Asia just east of the Caspian Sea. Conquered and subsequently controlled by Russia in the late nineteenth century, Turkestan had been producing pile rugs for decades before the Russians arrived.

All three of these Central Asian rugs can be correctly identified as Turkoman rugs; but during the past half century individuals interested in such rugs have attempted to assign all Turkoman weavings to one or another of the major tribes that exist within the general Turkoman group. The rug in the hall--it normally resides beneath the spinning wheel--is a product of the Yomud tribe. The Yomuds, like the other Turkoman groups, remained nomads until the Soviets inflicted a sedentary existence upon them after the Bolshevik Revolution. Prior to that time they, again like the other Turkoman groups, preferred fighting to working and were notorious for

their brigandage and barbarity and famous for their skills as horsemen.

In the front bedroom are examples of weavings from two other tribal groups, the Tekke and the Ersari. The Tekke rug is the more worn, the smaller, and the less symmetrical of the two Turkoman products in that room.

These rugs bear striking similarities. All contain similar dark colors, predominantly red; all three use similar design elements, in particular, elements that vaguely resemble stylized trees; and all three display a cross as the most dominant feature of their designs. The similarities result of course from the fact that all three are Turkoman products. Additionally the three rugs were originally woven as "engsis" or door coverings by their makers, all of whom were nomads and lived in easily transportable yurts.

Because Central Asia is about as inhospitable as almost any part of the globe, door coverings were essential for dwellings, even those occupied by a people as hardy as the Turkomans. Every rug dealer from Ashkabad, the capital of Turkestan to San Francisco would, if given the opportunity, be happy to espouse one or another of several totally unsubstantiated theories why this particular design came to be used at the door. A close inspection of each of these rugs will reveal that, despite their obvious similarities, they are significantly different in terms of specific details.

The remaining two rugs in the bedrooms, another in the front bedroom and one in the small back bedroom, originated in another area conquered by Russia in the nineteenth century, the Caucasus, that area immediately west of the Caspian Sea and immediately north of Iran. Of the five major Oriental rug-producing areas of the world--Iran, Turkey, Turkestan, the Caucasus, and China--weavings from three--Iran, Turkestan, and the Caucasus--are represented in the Attmore-Oliver House collection. Caucasian rugs, like those from the Heriz district of Iran and those from Turkestan,

contain rectilinear designs and consequently lack the refinement of technique one would associate with a Tabriz or some other workshop carpet from Iran. Caucasian rugs frequently possess as much charm as any woven article could, a charm based upon simplicity of pattern and warmth of color.

In the back bedroom is a Karabagh prayer rug from the southern Caucasus. Probably woven in the nineteenth century, it is a primitive rug, one that might well have been created for the weaver's own use and not for some distant market. It lacks symmetry but displays a playfulness and primordial quality that makes it worthy of close examination. The lower section of the rug features palmettes that vaguely resemble those found in certain eighteenth-century Karabagh rugs; the central section includes tarantula-like shapes; and the upper section, which contains the mihrab or prayer-arch, displays stylized animal figures and a stylized bird or tree. A so-called crab border and several guard borders surround the entire field. Do not allow the worn and faded condition of the rug to distract you from its unique features.

The other Caucasian, the one in the front bedroom, is a Shirvan rug from the East Caucasus, a product of the late nineteenth century. It contains three imposing Lesghi stars, two red and one ivory, and a carefully executed "wine cup" and serrated leaf border on an ivory field. Although Lesghi stars are typically associated with the northern Caucasus, the structural and technical features of this rug indicate it came from an area farther south and east. Probably woven for the Western market, the rug demonstrates the skill with which Caucasian weavers used color, and its near perfect symmetry contrasts with the spontaneity of the Karabagh just described.

None of the eight rugs and carpets mentioned would deserve inclusion in the Islamic collection of a major museum, but together they perform well in the Attmore-Oliver House. They bring a warmth to the house that other floor coverings could not provide.

They accentuate the beauty of the antiques on display, some of which are indeed worthy of any museum's Americana collection. And by providing a taste of three of the five major weaving traditions, they could, if given half a chance, whet the appetite of anyone at all curious about Oriental rugs. On your next visit to the house take a look at what is beneath your feet. The benefits could be great.

STREETS AND ROADS OF NEW BERN LINKING US WITH THE PAST

Fred Sloatman

I drive around the historic streets of New Bern, unconcerned with pavement, curb stones, and storm sewers. They are the icing on the cake, the mustard on the hot dog. I do not consider them a luxury. They are a part of our life that we accept without thought, for we never really knew the time they did not exist. I obey the traffic lights and stop signs without question, for they are a part of today's law and order. What is profound and sacred is the location, the soil beneath the pavement and the space above. It is here, on this very ground, that Baron Christoph von Graffenried laid out New Bern's streets almost 300 years ago. This is the space where men lived and died.

Street signs displaying names such as Pollock, Stanley, Lawson, and Tryon are reminders of a historic past, when men bearing these names walked and rode on these very streets. There are no structures remaining from the first settlement. We have to imagine. We also have to imagine the fear the first settlers had, living in this new land surrounded by hostile Indians. And then the slaughter. Men and women, living on these streets, killed by the Tuscaroras.

History is everywhere: on the roads leading to Beaufort, Washington, and Kinston, on the bridges spanning the rivers and creeks, and on the railroad tracks uniting this port city to the interior. Building those early roads and bridges was a laborious and backbreaking task. By the year 1760 the network of roads was complete, and Colonial Governor William Tryon moved the capital of North Carolina to New

Bern.

This thriving city was the hub of Craven County. Farmers and planters transported their crops to New Bern for sale. Sailing ships from up and down the seaboard tied up at the piers that lined Front Street. The new Palace overlooking the Trent River was the talk of that day. Then came the American Revolution.

American patriots marching over the King's Highway from Wilmington entered New Bern in 1777, forcing Tories to leave the area. They returned in 1781 to destroy the rigging of vessels on the waterfront. Then came the birth of a new and independent nation.

In 1791 George Washington, the nation's first president, paid honor to New Bern by stopping here during his Southern Tour. Local dignitaries escorted him around the streets. It is reported that he attended Christ Church which stood on the corner of Pollock and Middle Streets.

New Bern was growing at the turn of the century. The Price-Fitch map, based on the first formal survey made in 1809-10 by Jonathan Price, shows the expansion. What is now First Street was then called Muddy Street. I was disappointed not to find a Dusty Lane or a Rutty Road.

Aside from maintaining post roads the federal government was not involved with local road building. Railroads and canals held the interest of a nation moving westward. For the most part roads in Craven County continued to be of dirt. There was no rock or gravel in this area, and road builders used the materials at hand. There were many early log corduroy roads which traversed the marshlands. Plank roads were a choice. Between 1849 and 1861 the General Assembly in Raleigh chartered 48 plank road companies. One was the Swift Creek Plank Company in Craven County. The charter allowed the company to collect tolls after they completed five miles of roadway. The plank road never materialized in Craven County.

The Civil War was not a year old when General

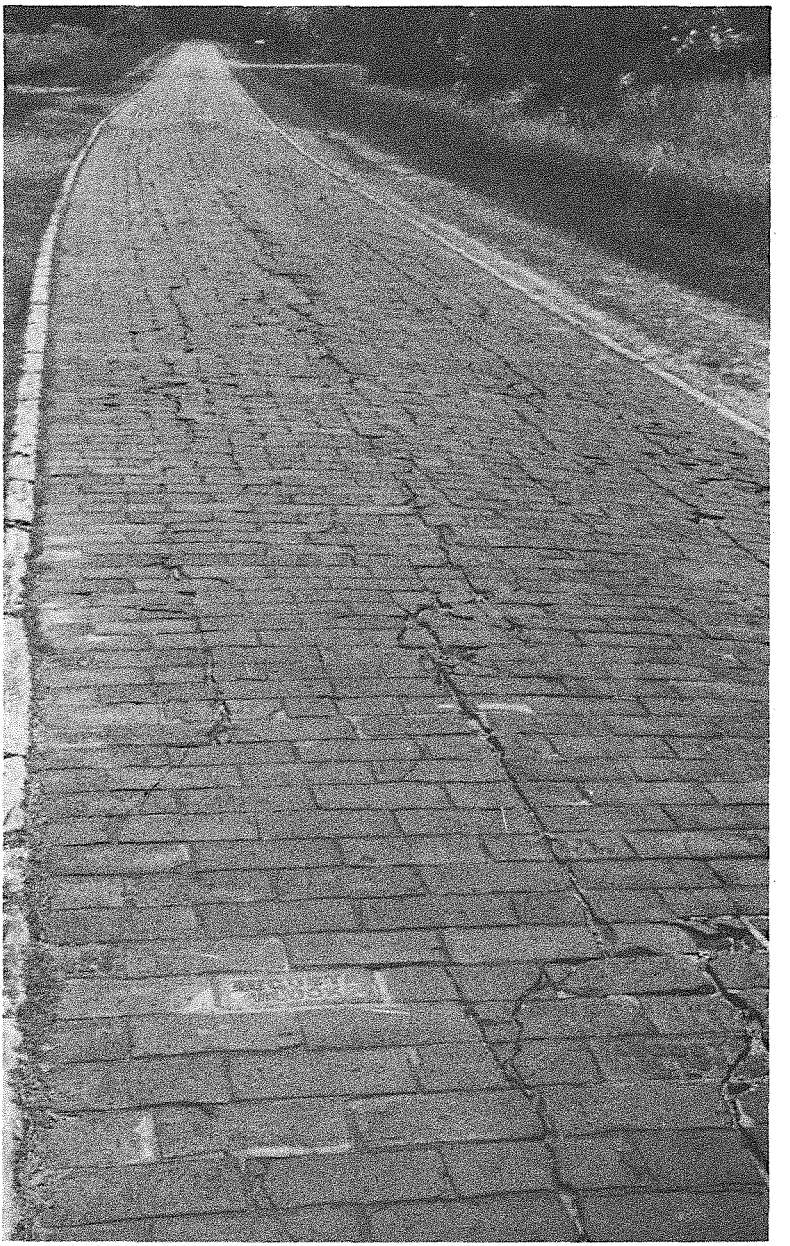
Burnside with thousands of federal troops trudged up the rain-soaked Beaufort Road. Years later Yankees would recall that trek, hauling cannon, wading knee-deep in mud. The following day, March 14, 1862, the battle for New Bern was fought four miles outside the city limit.

Many times I have stood at the foot of Hancock Street and gazed across the train trestle. I could imagine that fateful day when fleeing Confederate troops swarmed across the bridge with the Union forces not far behind. They torched the two bridges which spanned the Trent before the Yankees got there. Some soldiers were fortunate to hop aboard a train leaving for Kinston. The others took to the road and made the long trip on foot. For hours there was chaos and looting in New Bern. Finally, order was restored and this southern city was spared from destruction.

Roads in North Carolina suffered during the Reconstruction period. Eventually times got better. New types of roads began to appear along with the advent of the automobile. A federal appropriation provided funds to macadamize National Road which led to the National Cemetery. The town folks liked it and for years referred to it as "the macadamized road".

Gravel roads proved to be a mistake. Around 1916, Lillington Cement-Gravel was used on the Pembroke, Neuse, Trent, and Vanceboro Roads. The Tarvia method for resurfacing roads was tried at this time. Another type road was the "sand-clay mixture". Basically sand and clay were mixed, then rolled out. This proved to be a failure, as did a cheaper version of the macadamized road in which sand was substituted for gravel. It did not hold up.

During the second decade of this century the Good Road Movement began in North Carolina. It was at this time that New Bern hired its first road engineer, R. E. Snowden. This man can be credited for remarkable changes in the Craven County road system. In 1913 newspaper editor Owen G. Dunn was crusading for better roads. In an editorial in the



OLD BRICK ROAD TO POLLOCKSVILLE. Photo by Conway.

SUN-JOURNAL in 1916 he asked "Why not some brick roads?" Several city streets had been paved with brick just a few years before. The idea caught on. In July 1916 the county drew up a contract with the Georgia Engineering Company of Augusta to build nine miles of sample road. The following year the Georgia firm was awarded contracts to build over 50 miles of brick roads. In 1917 the road to Vanceboro was opened with great acclaim. Although they were only nine feet wide, motorists praised them. It was described "as smooth as velvet". Craven County now led the eastern counties with the Good Road Movement.

New Bern streets and roads have delivered us from the past to the present. That long bumpy ride is now history. I find great pleasure in riding through DeGraffenried Park over those tidy, 18-foot wide concrete streets which date back to 1926. Another adventure, a way to turn back the pages of time, is to drive out to River Bend. Just beyond the entrance, on the right hand side, is the beginning of a 1.3-mile stretch of the Old Pollocksville Red Brick Road. There one can see the old "Augusta Blocks" and drive down this nine-foot wide road into yesteryear. I have found that by squinting my eyes in the late afternoon when the sun is low in the sky I can almost see a Model "T" Ford coming in my direction.

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CORRIGENDA

After the Spring 1993 issue of the JOURNAL was printed, errors were discovered in "Streets and Roads of New Bern Linking Us with the Past" by Fred Sloatman. The second paragraph on page 12 concerns the relationship between supporters and opponents of the Revolution.

Although New Bern did not actively engage in battle with the British, the populace was a source of irritation to the Crown because of numerous blockade runners from this port city. At the same time Revolutionists, troubled that not everyone supported their cause, began to harass the Tories.

Patriots forced fleeing loyalists through the streets of New Bern in 1777 to board a ship bound for New York. British soldiers marched over the King's Highway from Wilmington and invaded New Bern on August 19, 1781, with hardly any opposition to their two-day occupation. Their purpose was to destroy the rigging on the ships in port and stop the privateers from running the British blockade.

In the fourth paragraph on page 12 a line was inadvertently omitted. The paragraph should read:

New Bern was growing at the turn of the century. The Price-Fitch map, based on the first formal survey made in 1809-10 by Jonathan Price, shows the expansion. What is now First Street was then End Street. What we know today as Bern Street was then called Muddy Street. I was disappointed not to find a Dusty Lane or a Rutty Road.

JAMES CITY

Mary Baker

To understand how James City came to be, one must go back to 1862 when General Ambrose Burnside, the Union commander, and U. S. troops occupied New Bern. While there was no television or radio with news on the hour and half-hour, there were newspapers, and for the slaves who could neither read nor write there was word of mouth. News of the Union occupation soon spread to the farms and plantations where these people lived. Many of them determined to seek freedom in New Bern within the Union lines. Accordingly it was not long before General Burnside had a new problem with which to deal--what to do with the hundreds of fugitive blacks streaming into the town. He decided to consider them as contraband (not to be returned to their masters).

With this decision the next problem was how to care for these people. They needed food, many needed clothing, and all needed housing. Burnside appointed Vincent Colyer as Superintendent of the Poor. He was in charge of securing and distributing aid to the poor, both black and white. (There were many indigent white people in New Bern in the spring of 1862.) Colyer, with the help of servicemen as teachers, opened schools for blacks, helped organize churches, and had blacks vaccinated for smallpox. Unfortunately when General Burnside was ordered to Virginia in the summer of that year, Mr. Colyer accompanied him.

The Reverend James Means was appointed to the post vacated by Colyer. Mr. Means died of yellow fever within a few months, and the position was then taken by the Reverend Horace James, who had come to New Bern as the chaplain of the Twenty Fifth

Massachusetts Infantry Regulars. He picked up where Mr. Colyer had left off and continued with the schools and churches. He oversaw the issuing of food and clothing. He was also in charge of labor contracts between blacks and whites. Many blacks were hired to rebuild the railroad bridge which had been fired by the Confederate troops. Many more worked at building fortifications around New Bern, Hatteras, and Roanoke Island. In addition many served as day laborers in New Bern and for the army. Some men became spies, scouts, or guides. Eventually a number of them entered the army as soldiers. However most of them turned to farming, an occupation they knew well.

Even with all of this Mr. James wanted to establish a camp or settlement exclusively for the blacks. He felt that schooling and training would be simplified if he could get a number of them in one place. In 1863 he took about 30 acres of property across the Trent River which the government had seized from the Evans family and apportioned it into small lots. The area later had 800 houses. In 1864 there were 2798 freedmen there. By 1865 the area had a (Freedman's) "Bureau Headquarters, a school, a blacksmith shop, a hospital and several churches". Originally the area was called the Trent River Camp or the Trent River Settlement. By the end of the war the area was named James City in honor of Mr. James.

Horace James saw the necessity for these blacks to own their own land, and he encouraged the government to purchase the land and resell the property to the blacks. This was not done. The government in 1867 restored land to the Evans family, land which included James City. Some of the blacks had already moved, fearing just such an outcome. Nevertheless there were still 1760 freedmen in the area, down almost half from the 3000 at the end of the war. Those who chose to stay were expected to pay rent to the Evanses: 25 cents to one dollar a month, depending upon the lot and what was on it. The Freedman's Bureau interceded with the Evans family

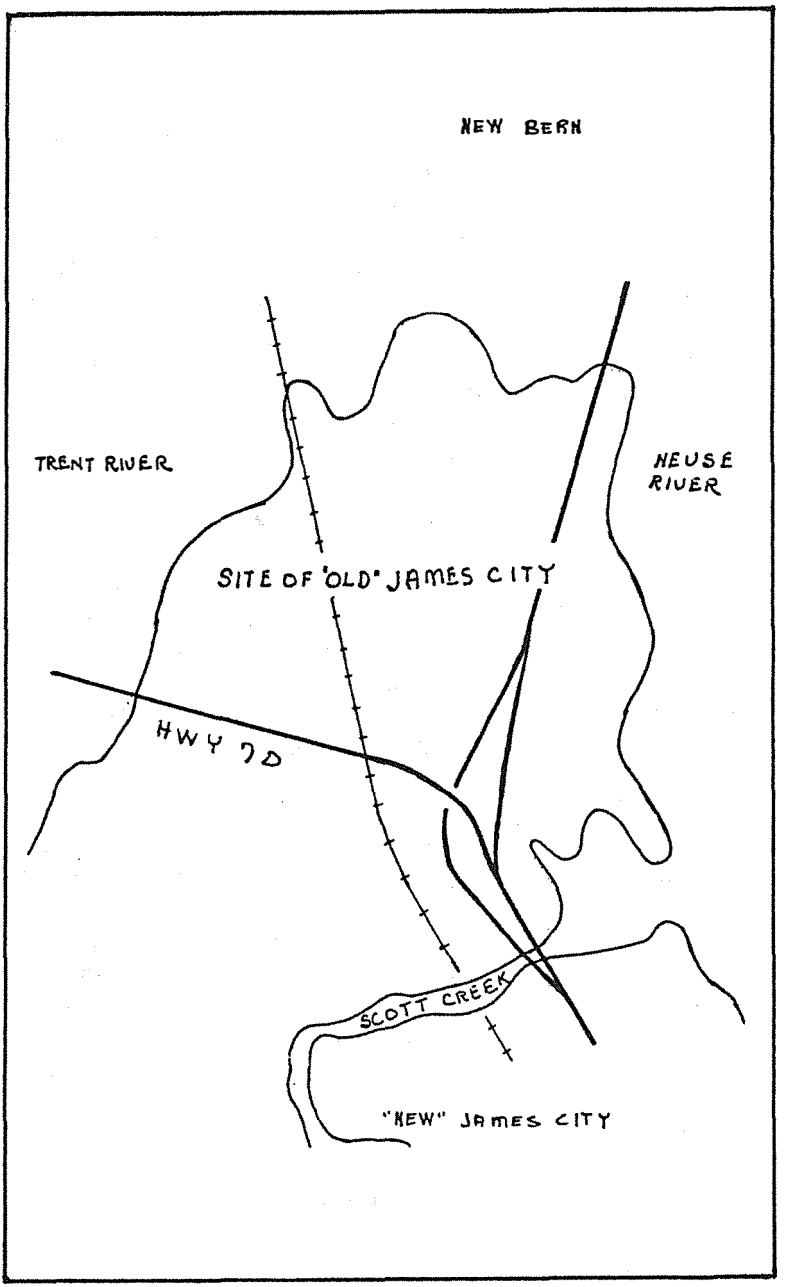
members to have them sell property to the blacks, but they refused.

Matters stayed like this until 1880 when the Evans heirs sold 618 acres of land, including James City, to Mary S. Bryan of New Bern. Mrs. Bryan's husband James A. Bryan was part of a large and prominent landowning family and sent agents to collect the rents which the people said the previous owners had not collected. Once more they asked to buy the land they were living on and once more were refused. Mr. Bryan wanted to evict the blacks, but they would not leave. He brought a suit against them in October 1881. The residents prepared to fight the suit and managed to delay the hearing until 1889. At this hearing it was ruled that Mr. Bryan must sue each renter separately. This ruling was overturned in 1891, and the court ruled in favor of Mr. Bryan and his right to evict.

In March 1893 a Committee of Twelve appealed to Governor Elias Carr in Raleigh asking for the governor's assistance in helping the black residents keep their property. As a result Mr. Bryan offered the residents a one-time lease of three years. The plan was to give them time to move elsewhere.

Mr. Bryan wanted the land of James City and beyond for development. He foresaw the area as an important manufacturing area with the excellent water access available on the two sides of the point. He was however disappointed in his hope. While a few lumberyards and sawmills located there, not much else materialized. In 1896 Bryan renewed the leases with those tenants who still lived in the area. Those who could afford to move were doing so.

In 1883 a group of James City residents bought land across Scott Creek from Robert Gray. This became known as Graysville. A few years later Mr. Gray sold the remainder of his property to J. A. Meadows & Co. This company also sold lots to people in James City. The community on the Meadows property became known as Meadowsville. Two other nearby communities became known as Leesville and Brownsville from the names of the


NEW BERN
TRENT RIVER
NEUSE RIVER
SITE OF "OLD" JAMES CITY
HWY 70
SCOTT CREEK
"NEW" JAMES CITY

INDUSTRIES IN JAMES CITY

The year after each entry refers to the year the company appeared on the Sanborn Insurance Maps. Most companies did not exist for more than a few years.

Neuse River Side

New Bern Lumber Co., (Prettyman Mill), 1893.
Wood Working Machinery, 1904.
Mills Campbell Lumber Co., 1908.
Carolina Paper Pulp Co., 1908.
The East Carolina Lumber Co., 1913.
E. H. & J. A. Meadows Co., Fertilizer Factory, 1913.

Trent River Side

Blades Lumber Co., 1893.
S. E. Sullivan Saw Mill, 1904.
Munger Bennett, Saw & Planing Mill, 1904.
John L. Roper Lumber Co., Saw & Planing Mills (dismantled and abandoned--formerly Blades), 1908.
Virginia & Carolina Chemical Co., Fertilizer Works, 1913.
Clarks Lumber Co., 1913.
Millett Lumber Co., Inc., 1924.

original property owners. As these areas were settled by the people from "old" James City, the areas became known as "new" James City.

Many people continued to rent from Mr. Bryan or the Bryan heirs in "old" James City, but the number steadily declined. In the early 1900s all the James City churches moved to the new location.

World War II brought changes to both old and new James City. Many people left to work in other places; many left to serve in the armed forces. By the end of the war those few who still lived in "old" James City moved out and "old" James City essentially disappeared. Today there is scarcely a trace of what once was; "new" James City is the one and only James City.

What was James City like in the 1860s? The original lots planned by Superintendent James were about 40' x 60'. Not large. Yet most families made room for a small garden to serve their needs. Many families also farmed plots on the outskirts of the town and sold their produce in New Bern. This was a great help to the army in New Bern as it was otherwise dependent upon supplies brought up the Neuse. This was a help to the new freedmen as it put money in their pockets. In addition many of the men and women worked in New Bern as laborers, laundresses, housekeepers, or cooks.

In order to get from James City to New Bern and back people would walk the trestle--the railroad bridge. Some had boats in which to travel. In 1883 the county commissioners authorized a ferry from James City to New Bern. In 1884 the Clermont Bridge was built. In the early 1900s James City boasted two taxis--horse drawn carriages that were two seaters large enough to accommodate people wanting to go to New Bern or return. These used the Clermont Bridge.

It did not take long after its founding for James City to become a thriving small town with its schools, churches, small stores, hospital, and all of the other necessities. James City stayed this way until around 20 years ago. It was a small town

where everyone looked out for everyone else. Going to church and Sunday School was the event of the week, not only for worship, but, as one woman remarked, "to find out what was going on". Mothers would take their children to the river so they could splash and play in the water. In more recent years youngsters would gather in homes to play records, play games, or study. Children and parents would sit on their porches of an evening greeting friends who walked by. One person's problems were everyone's problems. Unhappily some of that is changing.

Children are bussed to school. People grow up and move away. The town residents look to New Bern or beyond for their needs. Not everyone counts the church as central in his life. So many people have lost their sense of belonging. As Grace George says, "The children don't know who they are".

Today a small group of James City residents are determined to help everyone living in James City know who they are. Mrs. George, for example, is actively pursuing a museum of James City history. A James City historical society is being formed to preserve the history of this important settlement.

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Special thanks to the following individuals:
Mrs. Grace George, who has been my mentor and guide to James City.
Mrs. Ernestine Clemmens and Mrs. Annie Gavin for

their stories and remembrances of James City.

GERTRUDE SPRAGUE CARRAWAY
1896-1993

Jim Gunn

The recent death of Gertrude Carraway brought to an end a remarkable life. Born at 207 Broad Street, New Bern, in the Victorian age, she could see the twenty-first century on the near horizon. In 96 years she witnessed the end of the bicycle and buggy era and the beginning of human beings living extra-terrestrially. She was no mere witness to history; she enveloped herself in it. Her endeavors in the historical field, over a full and distinguished lifetime brought her accolades and honors from many quarters. Miss Carraway lived a life few others could hope to fulfill and which many can envy.

Educated at the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, with post-graduate work at Columbia University, New York, she began her career in high school teaching. Later she was editor of the SMITHFIELD (N. C.) OBSERVER and returned to New Bern as city editor of the SUN-JOURNAL in 1924. She remained with the SUN-JOURNAL until 1937.

In 1923 Mrs. Richard N. Duffy, Judge R. A. Nunn, and other prominent citizens founded the New Bern Historical Society. These citizens realized New Bern had a 250-year history that was barely acknowledged, and they were determined to ensure its proper place in the historical record. Miss Carraway was induced to join in 1925 and at a 1926 meeting presented a paper on First (or Middle Street) Baptist Church. From this time the city editor became intimately involved with New Bern's colorful past and later was elected Secretary of the Historical Society, a post she held for several years. From a

quiet, yet dynamic, beginning in her home town this incredible lady used her journalistic talents to promote and develop historical interest in New Bern, the state of North Carolina and the nation. Miss Carraway continued to participate in Historical Society activities until recent illness curtailed her movements. Surely it is a record that she was a member for nearly 70 years.

The cause for which Miss Carraway exerted her greatest effort was the Tryon Palace restoration. Guided by the Historical Society and its President Mrs. R. N. Duffy, the hard-working young journalist became advocate and spokesperson for the Palace undertaking about 1927. After leaving the SUN-JOURNAL she devoted more time to the Tryon Palace project as a freelance author and journalist. In 1942 she took on the post of secretary of the committee set up to develop the restoration plans. Her pen was rarely still; she authored six books and upwards of 70 brochures and pamphlets. Her subjects were mainly related to New Bern; she wrote the history of Christ Church under the title CROWN OF LIFE and YEARS OF LIGHT, a history of St. John's Lodge, No. 3.

Another historically related dedication of Miss Carraway's was the Daughters of the American Revolution, and in 1950 she was sought out by executives of the D. A. R. and went to Washington, D. C., as Publicity Chairman. By 1953 she had displayed so much talent in her publicity role that she was named President-General and held that position until 1956. In 1955 she succeeded in having Constitution Week recognized nationally as a project of the D. A. R. Named Honorary President-General at the end of her term of office in the D. A. R., she continued active in local and state chapters.

In 1957, with the Tryon Palace restoration well underway, Miss Carraway returned to New Bern and accepted the position of Director. Remaining in that position until 1971, at the age of 75 she felt it was time to retire. But retirement was in name only; numerous boards, societies, and commissions in the

GERTRUDE SPRAGUE CARRAWAY (1896-1993)
Photo by Benners.

fields of history and education, many of which she was a member, continued to seek her guidance and advice. Until recently even in failing health she made a great effort to attend functions of those organizations in which she had an interest. She attended New Bern Historical Society meetings as late as 1992.

Honors and awards accorded Miss Carraway ranged from university degrees to those with a lighter touch, such as "Kentucky Colonel" and "Arkansas Traveler". As a correspondent for the Associated Press during World War II she received 12 patriotic awards for outstanding service to the country. In 1962 she was honored as North Carolinian of the Year. In 1958 she was named New Bern's Woman of the Year and Craven County Woman of the Year in 1985. Recognition came in many other ways, among them the Ruth Coltrane Cannon Award, North Carolina's most prestigious historic preservation award, and the Christopher Crittenden Memorial Award for significant contributions in North Carolina history. Miss Carraway is listed in more than 20 biographical dictionaries. Surely Miss Gertrude Carraway was New Bern's most distinguished citizen.

On May 7, 1993, Gertrude S. Carraway died at her home, 207 Broad Street, New Bern, the same house in which she was born. When asked what she desired most, considering all the recognition she had received, she replied that all she wanted to be known for was ". . . making New Bern a better place to live".

SOURCES

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BOOK REVIEW

WILLIAM TRYON AND THE COURSE OF EMPIRE--A LIFE IN THE BRITISH IMPERIAL SERVICE, by Paul David Nelson. (Chapel Hill, N. C., and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1990. Illustrations, chapter notes, selected bibliography, and index. 233 pp. $24.95.)

Well-known as the Governor of North Carolina who built a "Palace" in New Bern, William Tryon was a man of greater substance according to author Paul Nelson. In fact, the palatial monument of brick and stone hardly does proper justice to a man who made substantial efforts to govern well. All his efforts were despite overwhelming pressures from the British government in London and from the "colonials" in America. In nearly 20 years of service in America his record is lengthy and distinguished, but alas he was on the losing side in that eighteenth-century conflict known as the American Revolution. It has taken more than 200 years for the publication of this life study of Tryon, a major figure of the revolutionary period.

"Oceans of blood may be spilt", was Tryon's astute observation to the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State in London, after returning to America from Britain to take up the Governorship of New York in the summer of 1775. He further went on to say to Dartmouth that "in my opinion America will never receive ['accept' British] Parliamentary taxation". Prophet or pragmatist, William Tryon was a little of both. For most of his period of colonial service he tried to act as arbitrator between parties separated widely by distance and philosophy. Nelson is well qualified to choose Tryon as a subject, having written biographies of leaders on both sides of the

Revolution. Earlier books, the first published in 1903 by Marshall Haywood, cover Tryon's administration of North Carolina. In 1955 Alonzo Dill published GOVERNOR TRYON AND HIS PALACE. Thus two aspects of Tryon's career in North Carolina have been well documented. Nelson presents a much broader view of the man and his place in American history.

Born into an English aristocratic family in 1729, William Tryon was directly descended from a Peter Tryon [or Trieon], a man of Flemish origin. Reputedly Peter escaped from Europe with a fortune in 1562. Young William had many advantages, accrued through a wealthy family, which stood him well throughout his lifetime. At age 22 he entered the King's service with a commission as a First Lieutenant in the First Regiment of Foot, a position he would never have achieved solely on his own merit. This was the first stepping stone for his subsequent career in government service. A soldier in youth, he would again be a man of arms near the conclusion of his life. Having fought, although not intensely, in European wars and risen to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, Tryon decided to leave the army in 1763. He looked for other services he could perform for King and country; America and the new colonies beckoned.

Through "friends at court", he applied for a governorship, with a preference for New York. He was appointed instead Lieutenant-Governor of North Carolina due to the illness of Governor Arthur Dobbs in 1764. He was somewhat disappointed, but Dobbs was a sick man, and on his death in 1765 King George III appointed Tryon Governor. His administration was to be guided by a set of royal instructions containing no less than 119 parts!

A host of problems immediately beset the 35-year-old gentleman, and even 119 instructions could not solve all of them. It was not long before he took an extensive tour of the entire colony, a journey which in itself must have been trying on any man. While he first headquartered at his home in

Brunswick, he realized that a more central location would be much more efficient and chose New Bern, the second most important city and shipping port in the colony.

As the Palace was being constructed, rumblings came from the interior where "Regulators" were thwarting British laws as well as local laws passed by Tryon's government. If it were not Regulators giving problems, it was religious bickering centered around the established Church of England. A host of other difficulties passed on to him in an almost endless procession. Finally the London Parliament added the Stamp Act to his burden, which, along with the Sugar Act, imposed a tax burden which colonials were unwilling to accept. These grievances culminated in the Battle of Alamance in 1771. Despite a "victory" over the Regulators, Tryon could never again be comfortable as Governor of a rebellious province. Shortly afterward he left for New York, having been informed at an earlier date that the post would be his at an appropriate time.

His Governorship of New York was no more comfortable than that of North Carolina, and in the end he was forced to take up arms again. This time the war was to be in earnest; the forces against the British crown and government proved overwhelming. With the outbreak of open hostilities Tryon was forced to agree to a military administration of New York, and he was given the rank of Major General and made Commandant of the British Forces on Long Island. Apart from a successful raid on the colonist equipment store in Danbury, Connecticut, he saw little action. When the British Army commanders decreed that they would pursue a policy of "Devastation War", Tryon vehemently opposed the plan. He became unpopular with army and government officials and was relegated to little more than a General without troops or authority. Disillusioned by the hopelessness of the British cause, he had to be satisfied with a minor role in Revolutionary America. Tryon's departure in 1780 was not regretted by either the Continental Congress or the British

government. Neither had much to say to him.

Regardless of success, or lack of it, Tryon's life had been a strenuous one; illness, particularly when located in North Carolina, had been severe at times. At the age of 58 he began to feel that his life might be coming to a close, and he prepared his will and set family matters in order. In January 1788, well after the Revolutionary War had resulted in the defeat of an old nation and the creation of a new nation by the Treaty of Paris in 1783, Tryon was laid to rest in London.

In the long view, as set out by the author, Tryon was a just and humane man who would have liked to render every colonist his due, but cataclysmic events leave men of good will by the wayside of history, seldom to be revered. The assessment of Tryon's character and career has been altered by Nelson. Backed by substantial scholarship and research, there is good reason for this timely reassessment.

Jim Gunn